

Team Project Topics

Below are short descriptions of each team project topic. Scan through them to help you choose your team project topic preferences.

Remember that you, with your team, can take the topic in any direction you choose!

For a more detailed look into each of these, just go to the 'Encyclopedia of Melbourne' website and click one of the themes at the side: <http://www.emelbourne.net.au>

Down Time

Melbournians have always relished their time away from work and school, and the ways we have used our time has varied as much as our imaginations. Time has also had its impact as we have evolved from the 'land of the long weekend' to an always moving 24/7 society. To investigate our leisure time is to hold a mirror up to our values and ideals.

History

As you will learn this term, the history of Melbourne is much richer than simply people living like us but before us. There have been wars, depressions (real ones), disease outbreaks & poverty. All this intertwined with the daily affairs of politics, culture, sport and people trying to 'get along'. What is our place in this great story? Or is that for others to write?

Getting Around

Never does a week go by where Melbournians don't bemoan the state of our public transport system, or debate its future. But this area goes beyond just the public transport system. It goes to debates about rail lines and roads and what to build. But it also goes further still: disabled people, children, the elderly – how does society cater for their need to move from place to place and live their lives safely?

Music

Be it our first rock concert, our cringe-worthy efforts to learn the violin, playing drums in a garage band, or simply a pleasurable night out to see the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, it's hard to have a memory of living in Melbourne that doesn't involve music in some way. Music is a way of seeing ourselves and telling others who we are. The sounds of a city will give an insight to the souls who live there.

Sport

Love it or loath it, sport has been an integral part of Melbourne life since the beginning. From suburban games of street cricket and under 10's basketball games, right through to the MCG on Grand Final Day and Flemington on Cup Day, it's hard to imagine a Melbourne life untouched by sport.

Gaming

Humans are spending more and more of their lives using computers. For many young people, a large part of that time is spent playing different types of games. Gaming is rapidly changing with the development of new technology. From the first Atari and Nintendo consoles in the 1980s through to today's multi-million player online games, games affect how we spend our time, how we interact with each other, and maybe even how we think. The gaming industry is worth billions of dollars and employs all sorts of people. What does all this mean for life in Melbourne?

Art

Melbourne has a surprisingly rich artistic history. From the world renowned Heidelberg school in the city's early days, to modern graffiti lining our many laneways, art tries to tell us who we are. The debates about what constitutes art also reflect the values of the day. An investigation into art throughout our city's history will give great insight into the cutting edge thoughts of the times.

Melbourne & The World

The death of Princess Diana, the election of Barack Obama, democracy spreading throughout the Middle

East, various overseas environmental disasters, the global financial meltdown: Why did so many Melbournians care? Did it effect out lives? Now that should keep you busy.

Fashion

The first thing we do each day is to cover ourselves in clothes. Clothes for school, clothes for work, clothes for play. But do we wear our clothes, or do our clothes wear us? Does our choice of clothes set us free or imprison us? How we dress has a huge impact on how we think about ourselves and how others see us. The fashion industry tells us what's hot and what's not, but how do they know? Fashion in Melbourne is full of colour and life, but also big money.

Theatre

The theatre in Melbourne has long been a central point in our rich cultural life. In the days before television, the theatre was one of the main forms of entertainment for many. Today, it provides a forum for art, acting and social observation to merge into one medium for observing and analysing the society we live in.

Crime & Policing

Melbourne's legal history is a colourful one. Famous criminals, from Ned Kelly, through early 20th Century gangsters like the notorious Squizzy Taylor & bookmaker John Wren, have all made a big impression on the psyche of the city. But find out those on the other side too. How we catch these people (or why we don't) and what we do with them afterwards is as fascinating a story as the criminals themselves. It also tells us more about ourselves.

Asia in Melbourne

A seismic shift has taken place in our perception of self over just your lifetime. That is from being a European country and city outside of Europe, to being an Asian city and country. This mindshift isn't complete. Yet. Will it be soon? What changes will we need to make to our lives to become more Asian? If we do make them, will this be a good thing? Can we grab hold of more of the Asia we don't have without losing any of the Australia we do have? Hmmm.

The Law

What is the law and what purpose does it serve? Do you think it's perfect, or are there big flaws? The emotions that people feel when answering these questions have fuelled some of the most passionate debates in our history. Just wait until the next election if you doubt this claim. This topic invites you to come have a look for yourself, but beware – many of Melbourne's great minds have gone before you and come out bruised and battered!

Photography

This isn't a topic that can be taken very far back into Melbourne's history for the obvious reason. While technological advances are the obvious surface level change that has taken place, has this sparked a cultural adaptation to photo's in our lives? Is behavior different in today's world of endless digital snaps and facebook postings, for example?

Politics and Government

No characters have a bigger input into our history books than those at the top of the tree of government. Behind every chapter of our history lie the words, actions and priorities of those in charge. A look into the politics and government of this city and state should provide a fascinating insight into the characters, stories and legends that have had a very real impact on the society we live in today.

Aboriginal Melbourne

Melbourne was a shanty town at the farthest end of the European world only 170 years ago. That's only 2 x 85 year lifetimes. The history of Aboriginal Melbourne stretches back tens of thousands of years, spanning ice ages and vast changes in the world's climate. This history lives on today, though it can be well hidden to the naked eye. Have a closer look at the world's oldest surviving civilization and you may be surprised what you find.

Social Battles

Is Jack as good as his master? What has this question meant in the story of Melbourne? We'll provide the short answer: Tons. Now you provide the long answer. We're talking the battles over labour rights & unions, the battles for women equality, the battles to allow people your age to stay at school, the battles to provide basic housing to all, the battles for dignity for the aged and infirm, the battles over which way to battle drugs (including alcohol), violence and other social ills. Do you have innovative ideas? We'd love to hear them.

Multicultural Melbourne

Melbourne began as a single culture (not the English silly, the Wurundjeri). Since then, Melbourne has been shaped by numerous waves of immigration. Each one of these has shaped our city in irreversible ways. The process may nearly be complete as representatives of practically every nation and ethnic group now call Melbourne home. Have a look at what the Greeks did to Melbourne. Find a small piece of Tokyo making its mark. And tells us something about the emerging African Melbourne.

Architecture & Design

As we will learn, the architecture of a city is a mirror into the ways we want to live. As any old photo will tell you, this is constantly evolving. Remember too, designers and planners didn't just decide what colour your house was; they decided where it was, whether there was a footpath to walk on, a train station nearby, and trees on the nature strips, and whether you'd be walking to school or getting a lift (you thought only you and your parents decided!?!). Take a closer look at the visions that architects and planners of Melbourne had for us. Perhaps in doing so, you can see a bit of the future too.

Psychology

The science of the human thinking, feeling and behaviour is having a growing impact on how we live our lives. As we gather a greater understanding of what makes humans tick, we have greater power both to help people, and also to control people. Psychology can show how similar humans can be, but also can be used to understand the many differences between us. How will our growing understanding of the human mind affect life in Melbourne?

Drugs & Alcohol

Our relationship to drugs, including alcohol, has always been a defining feature of our society. Not just our use of drugs (or lack of), but our response to drugs and those who use them has also been a window into attitudes and morals. Can you tell us anything about our society by our attitudes to drugs and drug takers (again, including alcohol)? If so, what?

Education

Nothing will tell you more about a society than what they decide to teach their young (if anything). It's what the society deems important. It's also their best guess for the future. Often they have been wildly wrong. Perhaps they are today? From the Dickensian factory fodder schools of old to today's attempts at global education (Galileo!), the history of our education system is inseparable from our history full stop.

Food & Dining

Today, most of us take for granted a diet of variety that even our parents couldn't conceive of only 40 years ago. And it's not just what we eat that has changed. When we eat, how we eat, and who we eat with has also changed. What does this say about us? You tell . . .

Health and Medicine

The life expectancy of a Melbourne resident has doubled since Melbourne's European settlement. What has caused this? Has it been the work of a few medical and scientific geniuses, or is it something to do with the city itself? Can we see any of these factors at work in our everyday lives? A closer look at this might help us see the future better.

Media & Journalism

Have you ever heard the saying "the news is the news"? Some would say that no-one has more power over the city than those at the top level of government. The possible, and some would say definite, exception to this, is the media. How has Melbourne been portrayed back to its citizens throughout time? And how has this not just told history, but actually created it?

Religion

It may surprise you that our skyscrapers are a relatively modern phenomena. For most of our history, when people have looked up they've seen the great city and suburban churches and cathedrals. Religion in Melbourne has never been simply a private affair. It's been about money, power, place and even crime. Sometimes it's also been about God! As different groups of people move to Melbourne we see a huge diversity of religious beliefs, clothes, buildings and practices.

Science & Technology

Melbourne punches well above it's weight in terms of the contribution we've made to science. Would you know if some scientific world heavyweights such as Gustav Nossal and Peter Doherty were next to you at the Melbourne Central cinema? And that's to say nothing about our past heavyweights . . . While Melbourne has a glorious past and present in this area, we'd like to know something about the future. Perhaps you could tell us?

Environment

It's no exaggeration to say that Melbourne is its environment, from the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers, to Port Phillip Bay and the Dandenong Ranges. Melbourne exists in a superb natural setting. The architecture, housing & roads we build, the air we breathe, the games we play, and the food and water we consume are all also dictated by our environment and how well or badly we work with it. How have we treated our environment so far, and how will this have to change in the future if Melbourne is to be truly sustainable?

Cinema

Did you know that Australia is home to the world's first movie? As technology, working patterns, space and fashion have shifted, so has the way we see the world. What has changed and what remains? How has cinema in Melbourne changed over time? We don't just mean the addition of sound, colour and special effects, but plots, morals and our ideas of a story.

Literature

Melbourne has recently been declared a UNESCO 'City of Literature'. Like science, Melbourne also punches above its weight in Literature. Why is this, and what place do institutions such as the Melbourne Writers Festival and the State Library of Victoria have to play in modern day Melbourne?

Young people

To be a young person is a different experience place to place, and from time to time. In some places people your age (and much younger) are soldiers. Why not here, and what does this tell us about ourselves? Has being a young person in Melbourne changed through time? Brace yourself for this topic – to do it thoroughly, you may need to speak to some old people!

Money & Business

Business and the economy have been all the talk in the news lately. Has this always been the way, and why / why not? What is a 'good' economy, and can we see it in Melbourne? Where? What is the role of business in Melbourne life? You may also want to investigate issues about money: people's attitudes to it have changed in some ways, but not in others. How should it change in the future?

Ethics

How do you determine what is right or wrong? Who and/or what informs the debate about the thorny ethical dilemmas that our wider community [and occasionally – you as an individual] grapples with daily? Melbourne is frequently a site for robust community debate – about everything from medical ethics, to animal rights, gender relations, the environment, racism and education. Who leads these debates? Where do they happen? How much of an influence do these discussions about ethics have on our daily lives?

Animals

Animals have long been a source of fascination, entertainment and companionship. As a city, Melbourne is home to leaders in animal research, advocacy and protection. There are countless organisations and events that celebrate animals – domestic, indigenous and exotic. There are also many people considering the impact that non-indigenous animals are having upon our landscape and the native animals that

populate it. Does our community have a responsibility to protect animals? Are animals here to be admired, feared, loved or eaten? How do we [as a community or as individuals] decide what the correct response is?